



VAASAN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Tung Dao

ANALYZING AND DEVELOPING
BUSINESS TO BUSINESS MARKETING
STRATEGY
CASE STUDY: VNPT-IT

Business Economics
2019

ABSTRACT

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Author | Tung Dao |
| Title | Analyzing and Developing Business to Business Marketing Strategy – Case study: VNPT-IT |
| Year | 2020 |
| Language | English |
| Pages | 63 + 2 Appendices |
| Name of Supervisor | Jukka Paldanius |

VNPT Information Technology is a company operating in information technology business which was established in 2018. It is a subsidiary of VNPT Group with the task of developing information technology products and services to serve organizations, enterprises and government. However, the information technology market in Vietnam is developing, leading to this business becoming more competitive. Therefore, the company needs an appropriate marketing strategy to improve sales numbers and its competitiveness on the market. The objective of this thesis was to analyze the current marketing strategy of VNPT-IT and provide recommendations for development.

In the theoretical part, the thesis included the theoretical framework of segmentation, position and targeting in B2B marketing and the 4Ps of marketing mix.

The qualitative methodology was implemented through an interview with the manager of marketing and sales department of the company and participant observation during the internship. The empirical part explained the background information of VNPT-IT. In addition, SWOT analysis, segmentation, position and targeting will be explained to obtain a deeper understanding about company strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and its operation. Furthermore, the four factors of marketing mix which are product, price, place and promotion will be analyzed. The final section contains recommendations for improvement and conclusion.

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| 1.1 | Background | 6 |
| 1.2 | Research questions and objectives | 6 |
| 1.3 | Thesis structure | 7 |
| 2 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK | 9 |
| 2.1 | STP Model | 9 |
| 2.1.1 | Segmentation | 9 |
| 2.1.2 | Targeting | 13 |
| 2.1.3 | Positioning | 16 |
| 2.2 | Marketing mix strategy | 18 |
| 2.2.1 | Product | 18 |
| 2.2.2 | Price | 20 |
| 2.2.3 | Place | 22 |
| 2.2.4 | Promotion | 25 |
| 3 | METHODOLOGY | 28 |
| 3.1 | Research methodology | 28 |
| 3.2 | Research design | 29 |
| 3.3 | Data collection | 30 |
| 4 | VNPT-IT | 31 |
| 4.1 | Company background information | 31 |
| 4.2 | SWOT analyses | 32 |
| 4.2.1 | Strength | 32 |
| 4.2.2 | Weaknesses | 34 |
| 4.2.3 | Opportunities | 35 |
| 4.2.4 | Threats | 37 |
| 4.3 | Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning | 39 |
| 4.3.1 | Segmentation | 39 |
| 4.3.2 | Targeting | 40 |
| 4.3.3 | Positioning | 41 |
| 4.4 | Marketing mix strategy | 43 |
| 4.4.1 | Product | 43 |

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 4.4.2 | Price..... | 45 |
| 4.4.3 | Place | 47 |
| 4.4.4 | Promotion..... | 50 |
| 5 | RECOMMENDATIONS | 54 |
| 6 | CONCLUSION | 57 |
| 6.1 | Main findings..... | 57 |
| 6.2 | Research limitations and recommendation for further research | 58 |
| 7 | VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY | 59 |
| 8 | ACKNOWLEDGEMENT..... | 60 |
| 9 | REFERENCES | 61 |
| | APPENDIX | 64 |

TABLE OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1 Thesis structure | 7 |
| Figure 2 Targeting strategy (Dibb & Simkin 2012) | 15 |
| Figure 3 Factors affecting choice of target market strategy (Dibb & Simkin 2012) | 15 |
| Figure 4 Possible value propositions (Kotler & Armstrong 2016) | 17 |
| Figure 5 The three levels of product (Dibb et al. 2012) | 19 |
| Figure 6 Pricing collect the values created by other marketing mix element (Schindler 2012) | 21 |
| Figure 7 Factors influence pricing decision (Dibb et al. 2012) | 22 |
| Figure 8 Marketing channel for business to business products (Dibb et al. 2012) | 24 |
| Figure 9 General stages for developing and deploying an advertising campaign (Dibb et al. 2012) | 26 |
| Figure 10 Comparison of quantitative and qualitative data (White and Rayner 2014) | 28 |
| Figure 11 Company structure (VNPT-IT Website) | 32 |
| Figure 12 Type of IT services in Vietnam (TopDev, 2020) | 36 |
| Figure 13 VNPT business center in Hanoi (VNPT Website, 2020) | 49 |
| Figure 14 Mr. Ngo Dien Hy – General Director of VNPT-IT speech at 4G International Conference 2018 (VNPT Dien Bien, 2018) | 52 |
| Figure 15 VNPT-IT at Laos ICT Expo 2019 (VNPT Website, 2019) | 53 |

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In recent years, the growth of the technology market has brought many opportunities for enterprises in Vietnam. VNPT-IT was established in the industry 4.0 generation whose aim is not only to research and develop products but also become the leading digital service provider and digital hub in the regional and international market. In order to increase sales and improve company competitiveness, VNPT-IT needs a suitable marketing strategy to become more competitive in the technology market. Therefore, it is necessary to explore theoretical framework and practical solutions for the business to business marketing strategy for the purpose of competition, profitability and integration. In addition, the author had the opportunity to be an intern at the sales and marketing department in VNPT-IT so the study can provide a deeper explanation of the company's current strategy and its strength and weakness. This is the reason why the author chose this topic for the research.

1.2 Research questions and objectives

Wilson (2010) explained research objective as a specific statement that defined research aim and describes how the author is going to achieve that aim. It set the boundaries for the thesis so the author can concentrate on the point.

The purpose of the thesis is to focus on studying and analyzing the current marketing status and marketing strategy of the company. In addition, the thesis also evaluates if the current strategies could be developed more to improve the company's position on the market and attract more customers. The results of the study may bring advantages for VNPT-IT to have further growth in the future. In order to achieve the objective, the research will answer the following questions:

- What is the current marketing strategy of VNPT-IT?
- What should the company do to improve competitiveness and sales number?

1.3 Thesis structure

The first chapter of the thesis starts with the introduction part which aims to establish the context of the research and provide initial impression to the readers. It includes the understanding of current issues and background information of the case company. Moreover, it is followed by a statement of the purpose and a set of questions answered in the research paper. Finally, the introduction chapter will describe the thesis structure in detail. The figure below illustrates the content of the thesis.

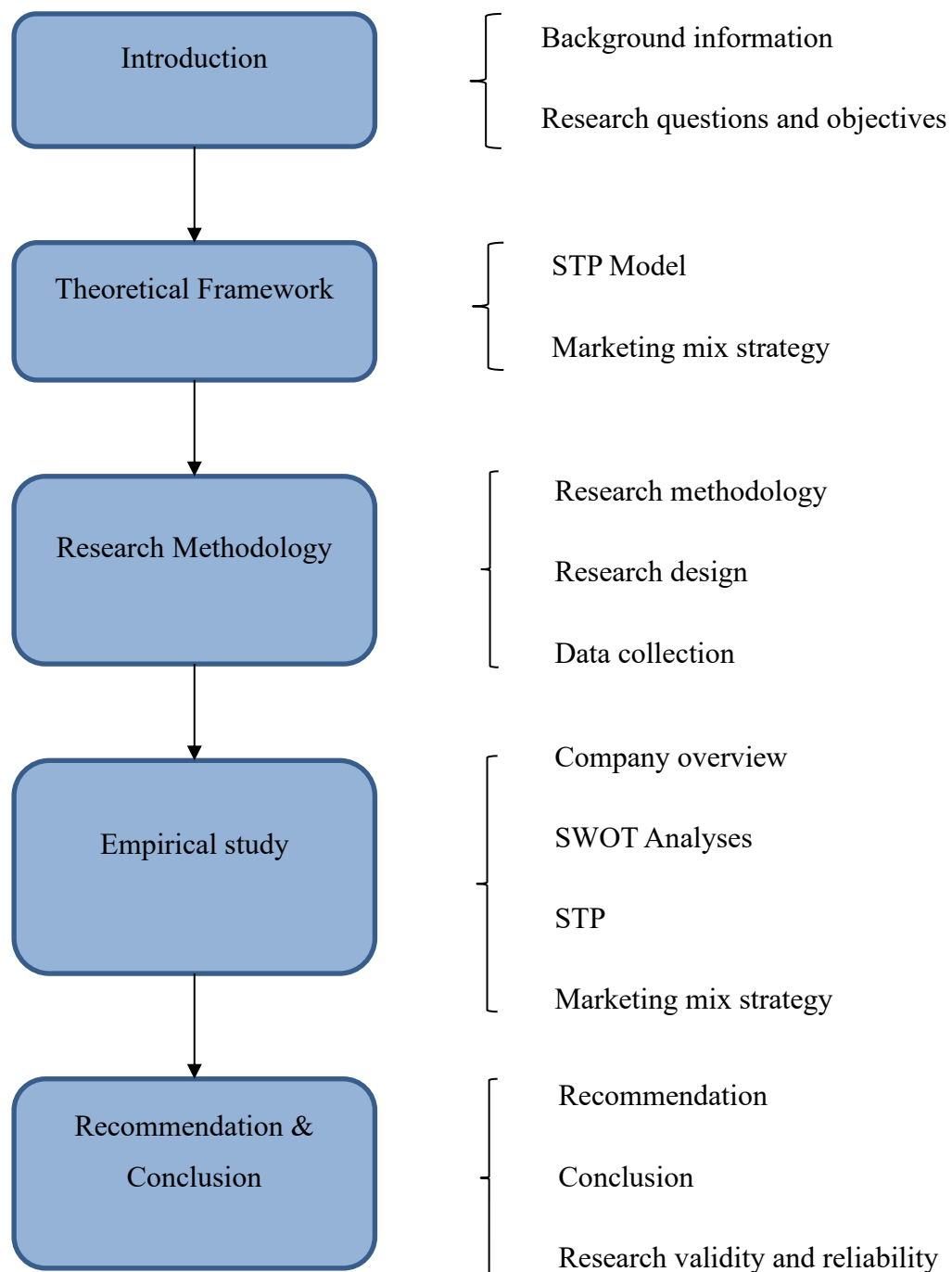


Figure 1 Thesis structure

The second chapter is the theoretical framework of the thesis. It explains the definition of PESTLE and SWOT analyses, STP model (segmentation, targeting, positioning) and the concept of 4Ps of Marketing Mix.

Following the theoretical framework is the research methodology part. In this chapter, the author explains the methodology implemented in the thesis and data collection process. The empirical part contains of case company information, SWOT and PESTLE analyses. Therefore, readers can have a better understanding of the current status of VNPT-IT and technology market in Vietnam. In addition, the STP model and the marketing mix strategy which are essential marketing tools to plan and execute the current marketing strategy are mentioned. Finally, the author will suggest some recommendation to develop the marketing strategy of the case company based on interview result and personal experience during his internship.

The final chapter consists of research limitations and further research possibilities. Then, the thesis results will be summarized in the conclusion part.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 STP Model

2.1.1 Segmentation

Nowadays, customers have various characteristics, needs and interests that need a company to satisfy all. A market in which all customers have different requirements is defined as heterogenous market. However, it is difficult for enterprises to serve customers in this market. Therefore, companies tend to identify and aggregate customers which have similar profiles and product needs into groups. As Sally Dibb has defined “Market segmentation is the process by which customers in markets with some heterogeneity can be grouped into smaller, more similar or homogeneous segments”. Art Weinstein also states that segmentation is the process of partitioning a market into a group of potential customers who have similar demands and buying behaviour. Customer segmentation brings a number of advantages in terms of customer level, competition, resource allocation and strategic planning. It helps the enterprise understand their customers better and make a suitable marketing strategy for each segment. In addition, it will allocate material and human resource effectively when the enterprise focuses on a specific segment. For business to business marketing, the company can classify the market segmentation based on five main elements which is company demographics, operating variables, purchasing approach, situational factors and buyer personal characteristics.

According to Sally Dibb, company demographics segmentation is the most widely used segmentation variable in business to business market. It divides the market based on type of business, geographic location, enterprise age and size. Different types of businesses have different product requirements, distribution systems and price structures. In addition, the geographical factor also needs to be considered when location can affect customer purchasing decision and business to business product consumption. The use of various segmentation base provides the marketer the full picture of potential customers and target market. (Dibb & Simkin 2012, 228)

In terms of operating variable, customer purchasing decision can be influenced by the operating factors such as the method of using the product, customer's technology and capabilities. Meanwhile, for the purchasing approach factor, the marketer should understand customer buying policies, purchasing centre structures and nature of existing relationship. These criteria can impact the organization's buying decision. (Dibb et al. 2012, 228)

Situational segmentation divides the business market on the basis of situational factors including the urgency of the purchase, size of order and product application. The urgent level of the order may affect the purchasing decision process of customer. In Marketing Concepts & Strategies book, Sally Dibb gives a good example of segment the market on basis of urgency. When a robot on a car production line is broken and delays the entire production process. Therefore, the pricing element may be less important than their availability whereas if the machine is being replaced as part of a maintenance service, price may be the most important element. (Dibb et al. 2012, 228)

In the business to business context, purchasing decisions are made in groups of people who responsible for making the buying decision in enterprises. Although personal characteristics do not affect as much as in consumer market, this factor still plays an important role in decision making of B2B products. The characteristics and attitude of the individual in buying centre also influence the purchasing decision process. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2016), each participant of the business buying process has different motives, perceptions and preferences that are influenced by personal characteristics. This individual factor includes age, income, education level, position in organization, personality and risk attitudes. Therefore, it is reasonable for the marketer to segment the business market based on the characteristics of the individual in buying centre.

Demographic

1. Industry: Which industries should we serve?

2. Company size: What sized companies should we serve?

3. Location: What geographical areas should we serve?

Operating Variable

4. Technology: What customer technologies should we focus on?

5. User or nonuser status: Should we serve heavy users, medium users, light users, or nonusers?

6. Customer capabilities: Should we serve customers needing many or few services?

Purchasing Approaches

7. Purchasing-function organization: Should we serve companies with a highly centralized or decentralized purchasing organization?

8. Power structure: Should we serve companies that are engineering dominated, financially dominated, and so on?

9. Nature of existing relationship: Should we serve companies with which we have strong relationships or simply go after the most desirable companies?

10. General purchasing policies: Should we serve companies that prefer leasing? Service contract? Systems purchases? Sealed bidding?

11. Purchasing criteria: Should we serve companies that are seeking quality? Service? Price?

Situational Factors

12. Urgency: Should we serve companies that need quick and sudden delivery or service?

| |
|---|
| 13. Specific application: Should we focus on a certain application of our product rather than all applications? |
| 14. Size or order: Should we focus on large or small orders? |
| Personal Characteristics |
| 15. Buyer-seller similarity: Should we serve companies whose people and values are similar to ours? |
| 16. Attitude toward risk: Should we serve risk-taking or risk-avoiding customers? |
| 17. Loyalty: Should we serve companies that show high loyalty to their suppliers? |

Table 1 Segmentation variables for business market (Kotler & Keller 2012)

The table above illustrates the major questions that business marketer should ask to identify which segments and customers to serve.

In addition, according to Art Weinstein the business market can also be segmented by benefit sought. Benefit segmentation aggregate customers who has similar purchasing motives in the group. It follows the guideline of the marketing concept which focus on the satisfaction of customer's needs. Marketers would analyse primary benefits and summation of benefits and use it to identify the pertinent market segment. Therefore, the company can design a suitable marketing strategy to meet the demands of specific customer sectors. The advantage of benefit sought segmentation is that it provides marketers with a new perspective and adds insight into the market situation. In addition, this method is also flexibility and adaptability when it can collaborate with other segmentation variables. (Weinstein 2004)

The marketer should consider five main criteria in order to have an effective segmentation process. The first element is measurable which means the segment must be easy to identify and measure. The marketer should identify variables for effectively segment customers into groups with similar product and service needs. In

addition, the segment should be large and profit enough to serve. It should be the largest possible group that is worth a tailored marketing strategy. Moreover, it should be accessible to reach and serve with the marketing program. The segments are also distinguishable and respond differently to the distinct marketing strategy. Finally, the segment should be actionable which means marketer can use marketing strategy to serve and attract customers. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 253)

2.1.2 Targeting

After the market segmentation process, the marketer will decide the appropriate segments they intend to enter in the next step. As Sally Dibb stated that “Segmentation targeting involves marketers in decisions about which market segment(s) an organization should prioritize for its sale and marketing effort”. In the business to business market, marketers should know which enterprises to concentrate on in their selling effort to have a suitable marketing strategy for approaching it. There are three basic targeting strategies that marketer can consider using in order to approach target market: undifferentiated strategy, differentiated strategy and concentrated strategy. (Dibb et al. 2012, 239)

The undifferentiated targeting strategy is a marketing strategy that the company sells one product with a single marketing mix for the entire market. This strategy assumes that all customers in the target market have similar demands and wants and company can satisfy major customer by serving single marketing mix. The marketing mix strategy has one product, one price, one promotion program and mass distribution channel targeting all customers in the market. The undifferentiated targeting strategy will be effective when it is homogeneous market which many customers have similar demands and have no natural segments. The enterprise must understand customer needs and design suitable marketing mix strategy to reach the broadest number of buyers. (Dibb et al. 2012, 240)

Meanwhile, when customers have different requirements marketers should consider a differentiated strategy or a concentrated targeting strategy. For a differentiated targeting strategy, the company target its marketing efforts toward two or more segments by using different marketing mix strategies for each. A company can offer

different products and services, price, promotion campaign and distribution method for different segments. The differentiated strategy creates more sales number than other strategies because its marketing mix are aimed to more customers. However, it also demands higher cost for production and marketing process. (Dibb et al. 2012, 242)

The concentrated approach is a marketing strategy which aims to single market segment through one marketing mix. It allows company specializing its products, distribution and promotion. This strategy help enterprise analyse and gain more information of customer in target segment so company can satisfy customer needs, desires and demands. Therefore, the company achieves a strong position in the market and a high sales volume. In addition, a concentrated strategy allows a small sized company with limited resources to compete with larger organizations. (Dibb et al. 2012, 240; Kotler & Keller 2012, 234)

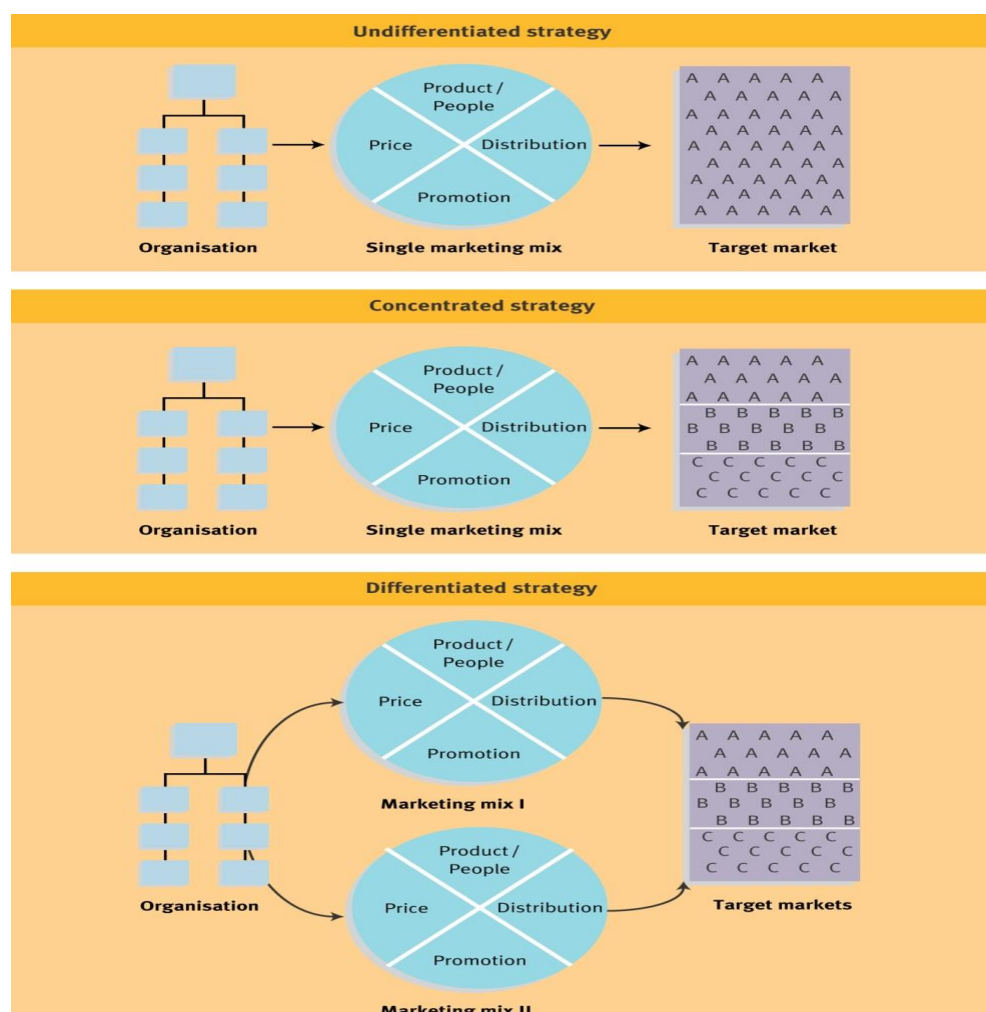


Figure 2 Targeting strategy (Dibb & Simkin 2012)

The customized targeting strategy also known as one to one to one marketing or segment of one. This customized marketing allows customers power to design the product of their choice. It provides the tool for customers to design their own products and the company will respond to individuals by customizing its products, services, and messages on a one-to-one basis. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 235)

During evaluating and selecting the targeting strategy, the marketer should consider several factors which include: the nature of end user needs; the size, structure and future potential of the segment; the availability of organization resources; the level of the competition; the size of the company's existing market share and the possibility of any production/marketing scale economies. Selecting suitable targeting strategy help company utilizing its strength and resources effectively. (Dibb et al. 2012, 245)

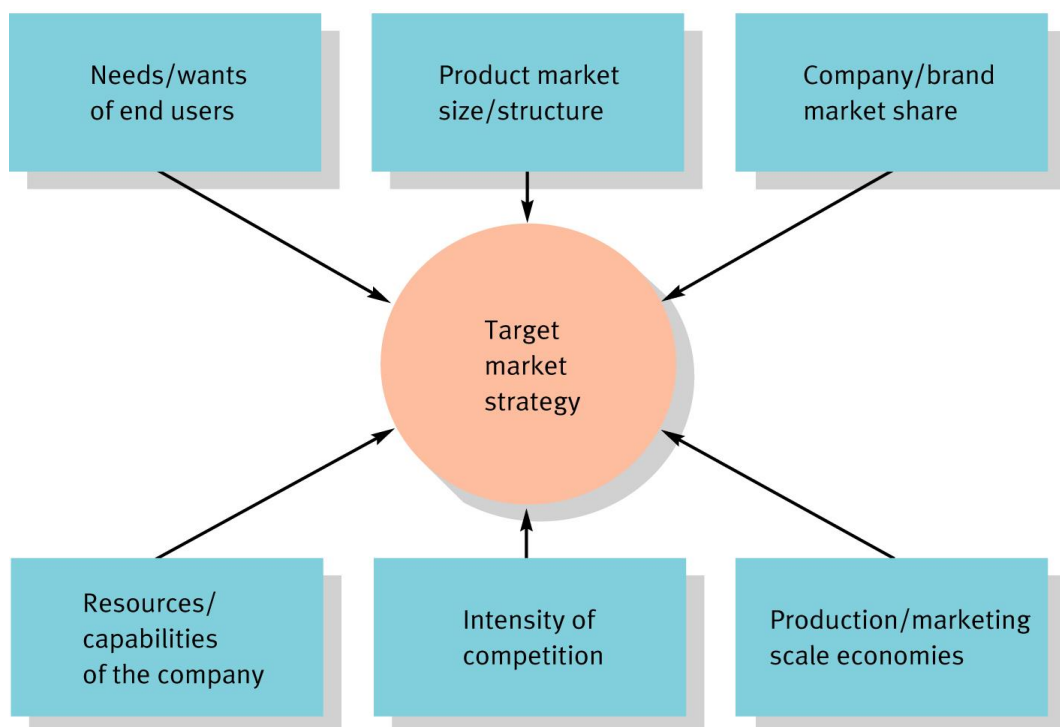


Figure 3 Factors affecting choice of target market strategy (Dibb & Simkin 2012)

The research of Art Weinstein shows that technology companies in B2B market understand the value of target marketing and the different in customer characteristics and demands. Most technology enterprises used a differentiated strategy and

more than half (54 per cent) were successful or very successful in targeting markets. Segment of 1 was the most successful strategy whereas undifferentiated approach was considered as good enough in some cases but often they are not overly successful. The top five factors that influence target market selection for B2B technology market are opportunities in the industry, sustainable differential advantage, profitability, product differentiation and customer satisfaction. (Weinstein 2014)

2.1.3 Positioning

After segmenting the market and selecting the target market, the company should position their products and services in the market so customers can recognize the distinctive in their offering and image. Sally Dibb defined that positioning is the process of creating product image in customers perception. Kotler also stated that “Positioning is designing a company’s offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the minds of the target market”. The objective of positioning process is to differentiate the product from competitors and establish the brand in customer mind. The marketer should build a marketing strategy revolving around a different product from competitors by clarifying the brand’s basis, determine the product benefits that customers receive and providing unique value. Therefore, the product can meet customer expectation and have sustainable position on the market. (Dibb et al. 2012, 251, Kotler et al. 2012, 276)

An effective positioning strategy consists of three phases. The first step is identifying the unique value and competitive advantages. In order to have competitive advantages, the company must understand customer demands and provide more value than competitors. The company can consider several factors such as product, services, people, distribution channel and brand image to differentiate its value. For the product, the enterprise can be different in design, quality and feature. However, in some circumstance the product can be similar so the company can differentiate the services that follow the product. Good customer service can create memorable experience for a customer that can differentiate the company from its competitors. Besides, the company can gain competitive advantage through designing an effective distribution channel and training or hiring better employees. Moreover, the customer also considers differentiation of brand image during purchasing process. A

brand image should carry the product unique benefits, company characteristic and its positioning. (Kotler & Armstrong 2016)

The second step is selecting the suitable competitive advantages to build positioning strategy. The company should consider how many and which differences to promote. A difference should be meaningful and worthwhile which satisfied several elements such as important, distinctive, superior, communicable, pre-emptive, affordable and profitable. The company can select between deliver one unique feature and be the number one on that feature or choose more than one differentiation. The third phase is selecting an overall positioning strategy. The figure below illustrates five successful positions that help the company gain competitive advantages which are more for more, more for the same, more for the less, the same for the less and less for much less. Once the company has selected its position, the company must effectively communicates and delivers desired position to target customers. (Kotler & Armstrong 2016)

| | | Price | | |
|----------|----------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| | | More | The same | Less |
| Benefits | More | More for more | More for the same | More for the less |
| | The same | | | The same for the less |
| | Less | | | Less for much less |

Figure 4 Possible value propositions (Kotler & Armstrong 2016)

Finally, the company should design a suitable positioning statement that summary its desired position. The statement should be plausible and memorable to customers

that expresses product characteristics, attributes and company methods for responding customer needs. The positioning statement declares the brand in a category which products have some similarities with other products and then shows the point of difference that superior from competitors. (Kotler & Armstrong 2016)

2.2 Marketing mix strategy

Marketing mix is the collection of marketing tools that a business uses to become more competitive in the market and promote its products or services to target customer. The elements of marketing mix are flexible and have various changes to adapt new technology and other changes on the market. The 4Ps concept of marketing mix was first introduced by McCarthy in 1960 namely product, price, promotion and place. By using 4Ps model, the marketer can create an effective marketing strategy that can reach target customers and increase sales. (Lake 2019)

2.2.1 Product

According to Kotler and Armstrong, they defined product as everything that can be offered to the market for attention, purchase, use or consumption. It includes both tangible physical entity and intangible services. When customers purchase a product, they are acquiring the benefits, satisfaction and customer experience that product offers. Products consists of two main categories which are consumer products and business product. A product can be both classified as consumer products and business product, depending on the purpose of the user. Business products are purchased for company objective such as its operation or manufacturing other items. They can be divided into seven groups based on their nature and purpose which are raw materials, major equipment, accessory items, component parts, process materials, consumable supplies and business services. (Dibb et al. 2012, Kotler et al. 2016, 251)

The marketer can analyze products on three different levels in order to have a better understanding of their characteristics. The first level is the basic core product which is the value and benefit of product from customer's perspective. The core products

are offered by all competitors on the market as a minimum, so they cannot be competitive advantages during promotion. The second level is the actual product which is the product features and capabilities. The actual products include many factors such as their design, quality, durability, etc which are offered to the customer. However, few features are the actual core values that customers expect to have. The augmented product is added value that differentiates the product from the competitors. It includes customer service, warranty, delivery and after sale support. In the business to business context, this level is important to design suitable product that meets customer demands. It concentrates on both before and after sales services to provide the best customer experience. (Dibb et al. 2012, Kotler et al. 2016, 256)

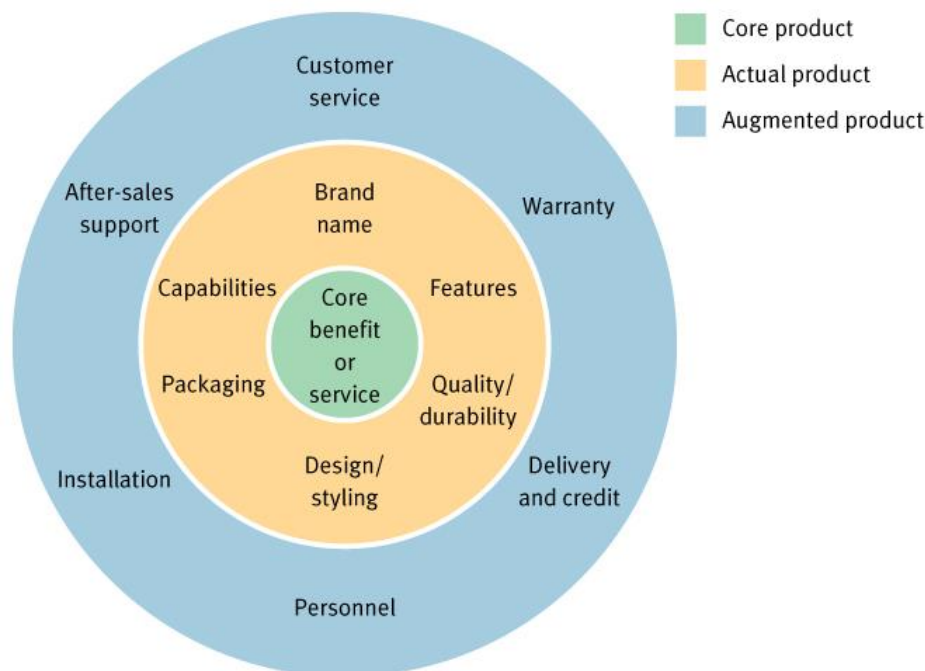


Figure 5 The three levels of product (Dibb et al. 2012)

A company has different products and services. According to Kotler, a group of products that is closely related because of similar using purpose, marketing and targeting the same customer group or having given price range is defined as product line. The company should understand customer demands and purposes to have suitable product line depth. There are two methods to extend product line which are line filling and line stretching. Product line filling is adding more items to the cur-

rent product line, whereas product line stretching is expanding its product line beyond its present range. Depending on company goals and resources, the marketers should select suitable strategy to reach optimum product line. Meanwhile, the product mix is a set of product lines that the company offers to customers. The width of product mix refers to a number of product lines that are available to customers. (Dibb et al. 2012, Kotler et al. 2016)

2.2.2 Price

Price is an essential factor in marketing mix to distinguish the product from other competitors. There are various definitions about price, but the concept of price can be understood as “the amount of money charged for product or service”. From the marketing aspect, price is the total value that customers are willing to spend to gain the benefits of having a product or service. This factor is different from other marketing mix elements. Product, place and promotion are concerned with creating value, whereas price is the only element that produces revenue. A small change in product price can have a direct impact on company profit. In addition, price also influences customer’s perception. The customer tends to assume that the higher product price often has more benefits and better quality. Therefore, the company uses this factor to emphasize products value and quality. Besides, price can be an effective competitive tool by decreasing the product price to attract more customers. (Kotler et al. 2016, 280, Blythe 2010)

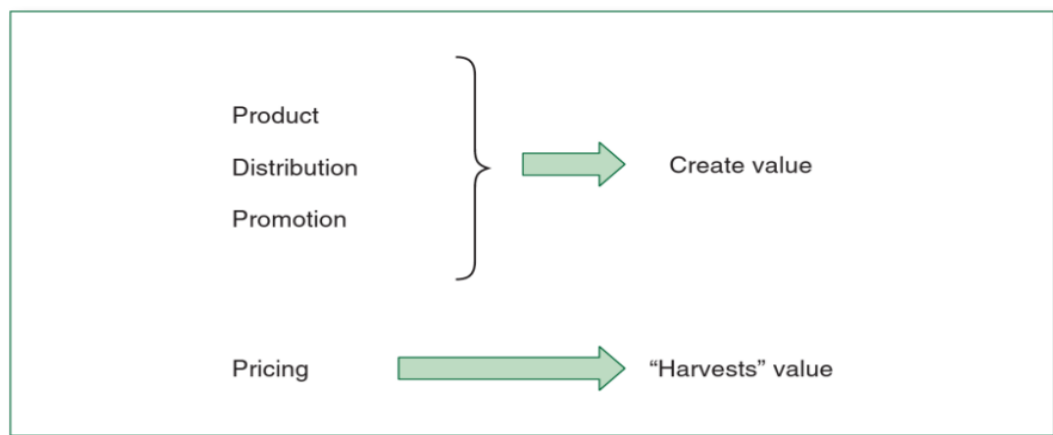


Figure 6 Pricing collects the values created by other marketing mix elements (Schindler 2012)

There are several factors that the marketers should consider when setting price. Firstly, the marketer should set products price following the company and pricing objectives. The product price should be set suitably for company goals and long-term strategies. Cost is another criterion that affects pricing decision. The product price should be higher than the total cost for a product in order to gain profit. Moreover, the pricing decision also be influenced by other marketing mix elements such as product, distribution channel and promotion. For distribution channel, the company should concern channel member expectations for profit and support services from producers. These intermediaries would expect to receive benefits for selling and delivering products to consumers. In addition, the company also needs to consider customer's perception when deciding the product price. The customer will evaluate whether the product value is worth with the benefits they receive. They will compare the price with the reference price such as from their expectation and experience or the price provided by competitors. Besides, the customer also judges product price based on their characteristics. Some people prefer to purchase quality product whereas price conscious people aim for low price. Therefore, the company needs to understand buyer's perception to determine suitable price. Furthermore, in the pricing decision, the marketer should also concern competitor's price. The customer tends to compare the price of similar products from different competitors. Therefore, the company should know competitor's offer to modify its own accordingly. Another factor influencing the pricing decision is the legal and regulatory

framework. The government can issue regulation to control the price at certain levels and determine the price increase rate. Government intervention in the pricing decisions is protecting the consumer's rights and prevent unfair competition between organizations. Finally, the company should consider customer perception of value. It is the benefits that the customers expect to receive from products or services comparing with the price. It includes level of using product, satisfaction level, after sale service, etc. (Dibb et al. 2012)

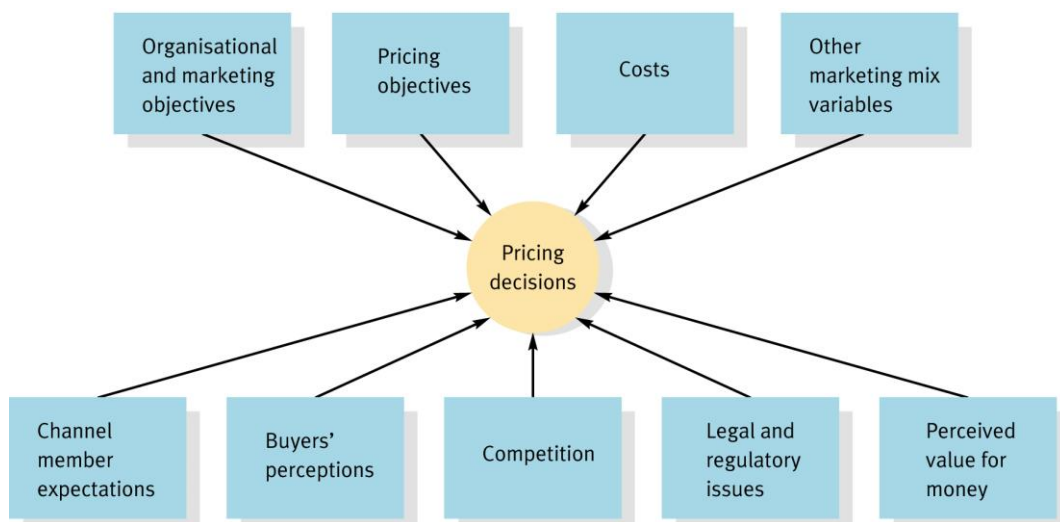


Figure 7 Factors influence pricing decision (Dibb et al. 2012)

In the business to business context, pricing strategy is sometimes different from consumer market. There are several factors such as size of order, geographic factor and transportation that the company should consider when deciding the product price. (Dibb et al. 2012)

2.2.3 Place

The place element in marketing mix means putting the product in right location, right time and appropriate condition for the customer to purchase. (Blythe 2010) It can be understood as channel of distribution or marketing channel. According to Dibb, the distribution channel is defined as “a set of individuals and organizations that directs the flow of products from producer to customers”. Place is an essential factor in marketing mix strategy because it decides product location and customers' accessibility to the product. In addition, it also influences the satisfaction level for

products and services. The producer can select between selling directly the products to end user or utilizing the service of intermediaries in order to reduce cost and unnecessary risks. Marketing intermediary is a middleman who connects manufacturer with other middleman or with consumers. It can be divided into two categories which are merchants and functional middlemen. Merchants include retailers and wholesalers who take the product ownership and resell them. Meanwhile, functional middlemen do not take ownership to product, but they support the trade between manufacturer and resellers. For example, agents and brokers do not purchase product themselves but they connect the producer with wholesalers and retailers. Each member in distribution channel may have different features and responsibilities but they need to cooperate with others to achieve success. (Dibb et al. 2012, 415)

Distribution channel brings many advantages to producer. Firstly, it reduces the complexity in exchanging product between producer and end user. If companies have intermediaries, they just need to focus on the demands of middleman instead of each individual customer. Therefore, companies can concentrate on their core operations – production and manufacturing. Moreover, the distributors have experiences, skills and competences needed to meet end user requirements. They create utility in four types which are place, time, ownership and information. The customers can purchase products at convenience location at any time they want. By using intermediaries, manufacturers can increase overall value in an offering and their competitive advantages. In addition, distribution cost and risk can be reduced when deliveries between producer and intermediaries occur frequently. (Baines & Fill 2014)

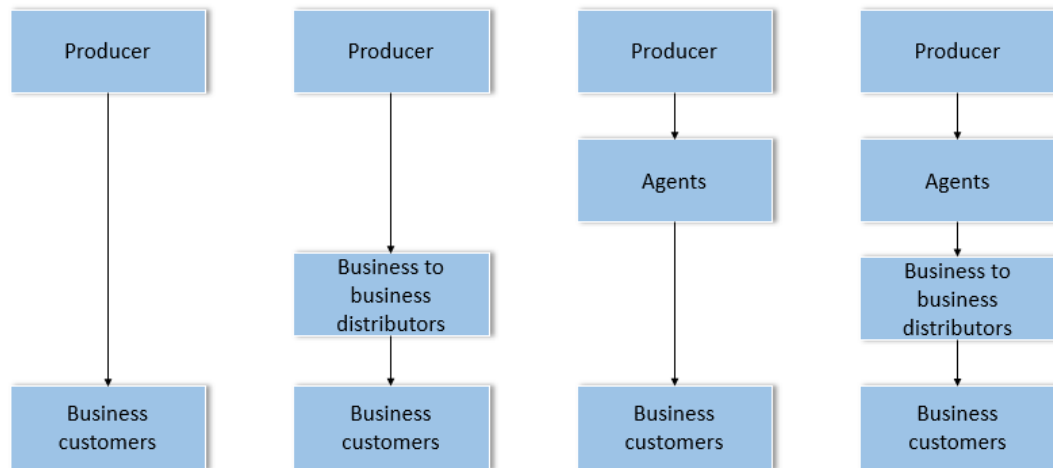


Figure 8 Marketing channel for business to business products (Dibb et al. 2012)

The figure above presents four main distribution channels for the business to business products and services. On the contrary to the consumer market, many enterprises select direct channel from producer to customers especially for expensive equipment. The company can provide technical support and after sale service to the customer for a long term. In second channel, the company uses industrial distributors to target more customers. Industrial distributor is an independent company that buys product ownership and carries inventories. This channel will be the most effective when product is easily stocked, sold in small quantities and attractive to the market. The company can select agents as intermediary when it needs market information or when the human resource is not enough for marketing and selling purpose. In the last distribution channel, products are delivered from producer to agents to industrial distributors and customers. The company can choose this type when it does not have enough salesforce and customers purchase goods in small number and it must be supplied frequently. (Dibb et al. 2012)

The companies should consider several factors when selecting distribution channel. The enterprises must concern customer demands and behaviors to match intermediaries with customers. They need to understand the current information about target customers such as how and when they buy the product. As to channel members aspect, the company must consider their needs and expectations for cooperation. Some intermediaries prefer single distribution channel, so they do not have to com-

pete with other companies carrying the same product line. Moreover, the geographic and business environment influences the distribution channel. Some distribution methods may be unavailable in some areas. In addition, the company also must concern its objectives and resources when selecting distribution channel. The characteristic of product affects choosing channel decision. The price, weight and bulkiness can determine which marketing channels are suitable. For foreign market, the company must consider storage and delivery cost. These factors decide the size of order that middlemen can handle. (Blythe & Martin 2016)

2.2.4 Promotion

The concept of promotion element in marketing mix includes all various tools of marketing communication. It is an important factor that the marketers use to implement marketing strategies. According to Dibb, the task of promotion is to communicate with appropriate individual, groups or organizations in order to promote transaction by persuading and informing target customers to accept the products and services. In addition, Fill stated that marketing communication also differentiates the brand from competitors and reinforces brand experience and expectation in customer perception. Successful promotion is depended on marketing environment information and the company's market insight. (Dibb et al. 2012)

To establish successful marketing communication, it is divided into six stages process. It includes identifying the target audience, determining the response sought, selecting the message, selecting marketing channel, choosing product characteristic that needs to be promoted and receives the feedback from audience. Marketers often use promotional mix as communication tools to approach their customers. As Blythe (2016) declared that promotional mix includes four main tools which are advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relation (PR). Each element has different tasks and is not interchangeable. Advertising is used to create customer awareness and brand value, sales promotion is used to encourage demand, personal selling refers to taking order and publicity transmits goodwill messages about company. The role of promotional mix is sending the message to customers

in the effective method in order to facilitate customers purchasing products and services. (Blythe et al. 2016, Baines et al. 2014)

Advertising is a paid form of non-personal communication that is conveyed through mass medium. The advantage of this marketing tool is that company can reach to more audiences or concentrate on specific target segment so customers can be aware of product and inform them about general product features and benefits. In addition, the company also use advertising to promote products and brand, to stimulate demand, to support sales force, to educate customers, to compete with competitors' advertisement, to improve use of product, to reduce sale fluctuations and to remind customer about product. The figure below illustrates eight steps in designing an advertising campaign to reach target customers. Depending on company resources, objectives and product characteristics the number of steps and the position may be adjusted accordingly. (Dibb et al. 2012)

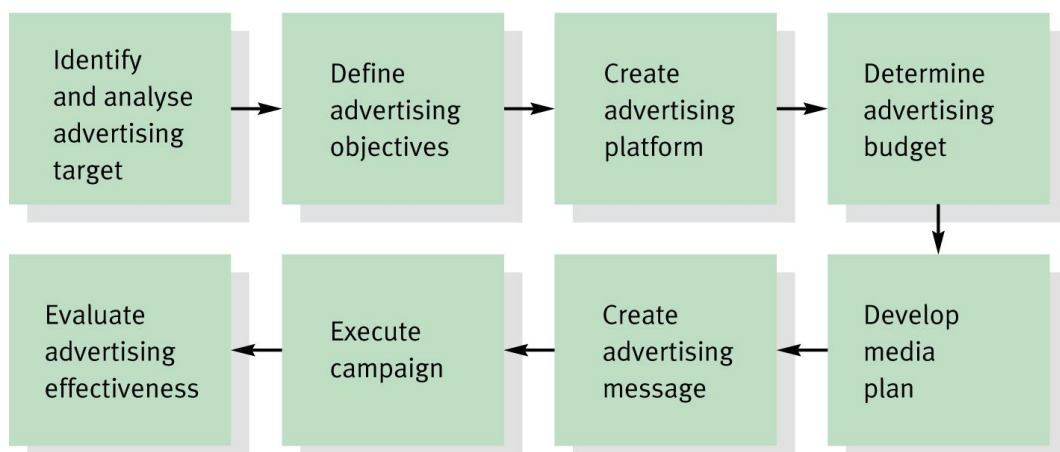


Figure 9 General stages for developing and deploying an advertising campaign (Dibb et al. 2012)

Sale promotions are short term activities in order to stimulate customer demand and sales number temporary by adding more value to the offer. This tool should associate with other elements of promotional mix to improve the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication. Sale promotions have four main features which are attracted to customers, related with product category, valuable to customer and reception delay. According to Dibb and Simkin, sale promotion methods can be divided into two groups. Consumer sales promotion aims to consumers to increase

the frequency and amount of purchase or encourage them to try new products. It could be coupons, free sample, money refund or discount. Meanwhile, trade sales promotion targets intermediaries to carry manufacturer product such as allowance, additional compensation and gifts. (Blythe et al. 2016, Dibb et al. 2012)

Personal selling is using personal communication to inform and persuade customers to purchase products and services. This method requires specific communication aim to an individual or several people. By using personal selling, the company can influence client purchasing decision and communicate with them better. The firm will receive immediate feedback from customers which allows the marketers to improve communication to meet customer's demands. Personal selling is preferred in the business to business context where customers expect personalized their experience and depend on their supplier's employees. Some business products have technical features that require support from the seller to ensure they work stably. Therefore, personal selling is a suitable tool for company to provide constant support and manage good relationship with customers. (Dibb et al. 2012)

Public relations are creating and maintaining good images and mutual understanding of organization in customer perception. This tool helps company achieve the number of results such as informing people about company's products and activities, creating positive image and countering bad reputation, improving employee motivation and supporting others promotional elements. There are many types of public relation techniques. The common method is press release which the company communicate with public through news media such as newspaper and magazine. Meanwhile, a press conference is a meeting organized by the company to announce important information to the public Besides, the company also can use approval from third party to enhance the credibility. (Dibb et al. 2012)

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research methodology

There are three main research methodologies which are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodology. According to White and Rayner (2014), quantitative research collects and analyzes statistical data to conclude the results based on evaluating a numerical figure. Qualitative methodology is referred to “relativist, constructivist or phenomenological”. It aims to understand the phenomena through evaluating subjective data. The figure below illustrates the comparison between qualitative and quantitative research. Meanwhile, mixed methodology combines more than one research paradigm to conduct research.

| Quantitative data | Qualitative data |
|---|---|
| Based on meanings derived from numbers. The data may be nominal (categorical), ordinal, interval or ratio. | Meaning is expressed in words. |
| Collection of data is numerical and in standardized form. | Collection of data is non-standardized and uses a variety of formats. |
| Analysis is by the use of tables, diagrams and statistical methods. The methods used depend on whether the data is nominal (categorical), ordinal, interval or ratio. | Analysis is via the use of descriptions and the identification of concepts. |

Figure 10 Comparison of quantitative and qualitative data (White and Rayner 2014)

In order to achieve the research objective, the author implemented the qualitative methodology for the empirical part. The reason that the author selected this method is that the thesis aims to understand and analyse the case company marketing mix strategy. Interview is the selected technique to collect data in order to receive insight opinion and description. In addition, the author also collects information from his own observation during a one-month internship in marketing and sale department of VNPT-IT. Therefore, the qualitative methodology is suitable paradigm for this thesis in order to have a deeper understanding of the case company.

3.2 Research design

According to White and Rayner (2014), information for qualitative paradigm can be obtained through a variety of techniques such as interviews, observation and diaries. In order to collect information, the author has selected personal interview and participant observation as research tool for this study. The advantage of personal interview is that the author can have a clear understanding of company information. In addition, the interviewer has flexibility to adjust the questionnaire according to the situation in order to receive detailed information. The interview is conducted in a face to face meeting with Mr. Ha – head of sales and marketing department and Mr. Khanh – deputy manager of business development division in sales and marketing department. The interview time is agreed between the author and interviewees before interview to be approximately 30 minutes. The content of the interview is recorded with the interviewee's permission. Meanwhile, the author also participated in marketing and sales operation of the case company during his internship. Therefore, the author collected more information and has a better insight into VNPT-IT.

The personal interview is conducted through a structured questionnaire that is prepared in advance (Appendix). The questionnaire is designed according to literature review in the theoretical part and previous research results. It aims to answer the thesis objectives which is to analyze the current marketing mix strategy of VNPT-IT and how to improve competitiveness and sales numbers. The questionnaire has three main topics which consist of VNPT-IT general information, marketing mix strategy and STP model. In term of marketing mix strategy and STP model, theoretical findings are used as a source for developing the questionnaire. There were smaller questions for each main topic in order to have more details and insight into the case company. This structure allows the author to direct the interview by identifying the main topics and providing time for interviewees to prepare the answers. Interviewees can also share their perspectives and experiences in different situations. Thus, the questionnaire aims to collect a great deal of information about company insight and its marketing mix strategy.

3.3 Data collection

Information can be classified into two main sources which are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is new information which researcher obtain through wide range of collection tools such as interviews, observation and diaries. It is up-to-date, accurate and specialized information. Meanwhile, secondary material is determined as the information that is published by previous researchers. (White et al., 2014)

In this study, the author collected both primary and secondary data. For primary data, the information was collected through three individual interviews and participant observation. The interviews were conducted through face to face meeting with head of sales and marketing department, deputy manager and one employee in this department. The interview was scheduled before the meeting which were carried during the internship on August 2019. Because all interviewees were Vietnamese, the questionnaire were created in Vietnamese version, so they had fully understood about question idea and avoid misunderstanding. The interview content was recorded under interviewees' consent. In addition, the author also took note during the conversations. The transcript was then created based on the note and the record for storage and further analysis in empirical study. Moreover, the author also participated in marketing and sales department operation. The researcher implemented observation of employee activities and company strategy. Information was also obtained from company documents such as contracts and minutes of meetings. The information was then noted in a Word file and was confirmed by employees in this division.

Meanwhile, the secondary data was collected from literature such as books, article, journals, etc. The author concentrated on main keywords: marketing mix, segmentation, targeting and positioning. In addition, VNPT-IT official website and other online articles were also reliable reference sources for data collection. Researcher can collect company information and latest news on VNPT-IT website. All collected information will be the foundation for further research analysis in empirical chapter.

4 VNPT-IT

4.1 Company background information

Vietnam Posts and Telecommunications Group (VNPT) is one of the leading corporations in the telecommunications and information technology industry in Vietnam. VNPT Information Technology Company is commonly abbreviated as VNPT-IT and is a subsidiary of Vietnam Posts and Telecommunications Group. The company was established in 2018 under Decision Number 39 dated March 1, 2018 of the Chairman of Vietnam Posts and Telecommunications Group which aim to reorganize corporation IT resources and tasks. (Website of VNPT-IT, 2019)

VNPT-IT is a key unit of VNPT in researching, integrating and developing software. It provides products and services to VNPT internal and external customers. Their customers include national organizations, domestic companies and international customers. In addition, it also ensures data security, maintains and develops IT systems and platforms for products and services provided to customers. The company achieved many prestigious national awards in the field of information technology such as: Sao Khue Award, Vietnamese Talented Award, etc. The company aims to improve the quality of products and services in all aspects to become a reputable brand in information technology field in Vietnam. (Website of VNPT-IT, 2019)

For the vision, the company desire to pioneer in investing, providing products, services and sustainable development in the field of information technology. The company will contribute to improve living standard and enhance the position of Vietnam in international market by developing, researching, outsourcing and examining in order to provide diversified products with high quality and reputation to meet social requirements.

VNPT-IT play an important role in implementing VNPT 4.0, participating in process of digital transforming economy and building digital government. The company carries the mission as well as responsibility to provide product and services to transform Vietnamese enterprises into digital business and produce platforms to

develop digital technologies in the future. The mission statement of the company is "For a civilized and transparent society that contributes to build a better Vietnamese life".

In the company structure, there are board of directors, offices of functional departments and VNPT-IT center in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh city, Da Nang, Hai Phong and Tien Giang. These centers are the dependent accounting unit of the company which located in urban areas.

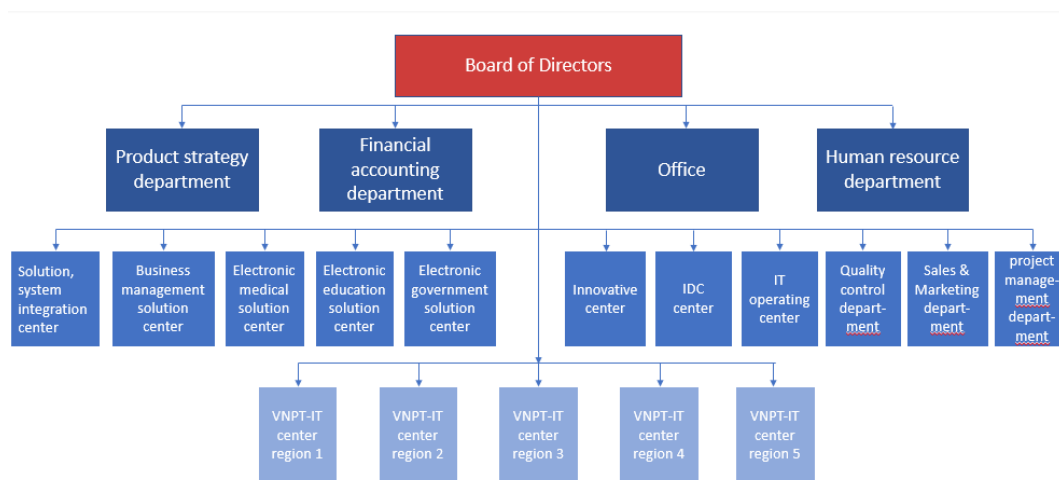


Figure 11 Company structure (VNPT-IT Website)

4.2 SWOT analyses

4.2.1 Strength

Firstly, VNPT-IT has strong capital and investment from the parent company. The company is a dependent accounting unit, so the financial capital of VNPT-IT is shared with the parent company. According to 2018 consolidated financial report, the owner equity was 66.3 billion VND (around 2.57 million Euro). A stable capital creates favorable condition for VNPT-IT to carry out production and business activities in an effective and continuous manner. It allows the company to invest in new technology, purchase copyright and innovate products. Thus, a strong capital provides advantages in company development and is competitive in the period of digital and smart technologies in the industrial revolution 4.0.

Secondly, the infrastructures and technology are well invested following international standards. The company currently has five main data centers of which two data centers receive Tier III certification of Uptime Institution in America. A data center that meets international standard cost approximately 700 billion VND (around 27.15 million Euro). The data center consists of equipment for engine room to run the server, network equipment, monitoring and management systems, air-conditioning systems, power supply systems and fire protection systems. Moreover, the company also buy license for software such as data base and cyber security applications from a third party to have a better operating system.

Another advantage is that the company has inherited benefits from VNPT Group. Besides the financial support, VNPT-IT also receive brand reputation and distribution channel from the parent company. VNPT is one of the most well-known brands in Vietnam. According to Forbes Vietnam 's list, in 2018 VNPT is the third most valuable brand in Vietnam with an estimated value of 416 million USD. Therefore, the company can take advantages of the big brand when customers prefer to choose famous units as their supplier to provide quality and stability products and services. In addition, the company has a large customer base which inheriting from telecommunications business. VNPT-IT's customers include government, enterprises, hospitals and schools and many customers are longtime customers and have a good cooperative relationship with VNPT. For the distribution channel, VNPT has their branches in 63 cities and provinces. Therefore, company can provide products and services in all region of Vietnam. Sales process also comes with customer caring and after sale services. The technical support team at the branch can provide instant and constant technical support to customers that can improve their experience.

Furthermore, VNPT-IT also has a wide product mix and depth product line which has total of 131 products and services. Therefore, the company can provide diverse products and services that meet customer demands. With product diversification, the company can attract more customers and enter potential segments which the company has not already operated in. Entering a new segment and product diversification offers the opportunity to improve the sales number and revenue. Moreover, product diversity can reduce risk factors. Due to the product diversification strategy,

the dependence on a single product or a single segment is reduced. Therefore, the company could reduce losses when facing risks. In addition, the variety of products also makes cross selling and bundle sales feasible to help VNPT-IT increase sales.

4.2.2 Weaknesses

Although VNPT-IT has many advantages on the market, the company still has several drawbacks. Firstly, VNPT-IT is a subsidiary of VNPT Group which is owned by the Vietnamese Government. Therefore, the company must follow the government standards and decisions. The decision-making power not only belongs to the board of directors, but also needs to be approved in terms of policy from the Communist Party of Vietnam. The Government wants to control strictly to prevent loss which makes the planning and approval of strategies more complicated and difficult to reach consensus due to the participation of many parties. As the result, it makes the company become passive in production and innovation process.

Secondly, the change of business line is another essential factor. Vietnam Posts and Telecommunications Group is a leading corporation in telecommunications business in Vietnam. After restructuring the organization, VNPT-IT was established in 2018 which the main business line is focus on information technology. However, the company still lack experience and historical factors in IT that make company become less competitive in the market. The company had merging many companies and procedures of other organizations during the restructuring that make their procedures were complicated and overlapped. Therefore, VNPT-IT needs more time to consolidate and improve their processes to be more organized and methodical. Besides, the number of high-quality human resource is lower compared with the demand of the company. The company has many products and services that demand human resource to maintain or upgrade for a better version. However, the lack of IT employees makes it difficult in the human resource distribution. In 2020, the company has 5,000 IT employees. The employees are required to have knowledge and experience in information technology.

Furthermore, the corporation structure is complicated. The business model is separated which each subsidiary focuses on difference tasks. VNPT-IT concentrates on

investing infrastructure and producing process, whereas VNPT Vinaphone and business center in 63 provinces of Vietnam are responsible for sales and customer services. However, the cooperation between manufacturing unit and sales unit is not fully synchronized. The parent company has not issued clear policies of price transfer to regulate the relationship between subsidiaries. In addition, the company's reward and punishment policy is still unclear to create motivation and connection. As a result, the company operation is not effective and bring highest profit which cause loss in human resource and assets.

4.2.3 Opportunities

As to the opportunity aspect, the Vietnamese market is a potential market for the IT business. Considering the political factor, the Vietnamese government is being more aware of the importance of information technology, so the government has issued several decisions in order to encourage digital transformation in organizations. According to the Ministry of Information and Communications 2019 summary and 2020 orientation report, the total revenue for ICT industry was estimated at \$110 billion USD which increased 9.8% compared with 2018. The revenue of software industry reached five billion dollars with the growth rate of 13.8% (Ministry of Information and Communications). Meanwhile, as to the social factor, the urbanization makes more people move to large cities such as Hanoi, Hoc Chi Minh city, Danang, etc. It leads to these cities becoming the destination for many organizations. These are potential customers for VNPT-IT. Besides, Vietnamese citizens are increasingly technology savvy, especially for smartphone usage. There are 50,000 IT students graduate annually from 153 IT institutions. These are both human resource and potential customers in the future. In TopDev's IT Market 2020 report, IT services will be developed strongly this year.

TYPES OF IT SERVICES IN VIETNAM

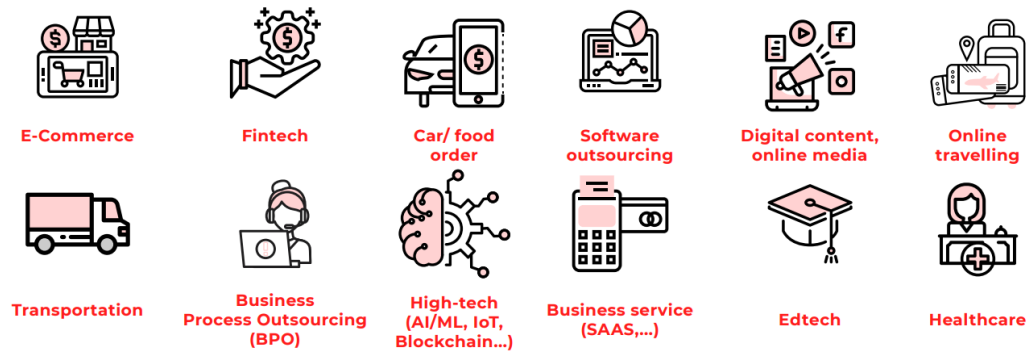


Figure 12 Type of IT services in Vietnam (TopDev, 2020)

Another opportunity for VNPT-IT is the demand of information technology and digital transformation. Vietnam is a developing country with high growth rate. Therefore, it has a high demand for technology in a large scale from government to businesses and organizations. The government and enterprises are being aware of applying technology into their operation to improve productivity, quality and management. In October 14, 2015 the government has issued the resolution number 36 about e-government in order to promote e-government development and improve the quality, efficiency of state agencies to serve the citizen and enterprises. According to the report of IT application assessment of ministries and government agencies from Ministry of Information and Communications in 2016, applications for management are already used by ministries and government agencies. 89.47% of ministries and government agencies has connected to wide area network (WAN). The government also has website and portal to provide information and more than 100,000 online public services to citizen and enterprises. The following table illustrates ICT Index of IT application and development of all ministries in 2018.

| Ministries and ministerial-level agencies | IT application index | IT infrastructure index |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Ministry of Finance | 0.806 | 0.751 |
| Ministry of Industry and Trade | 0.791 | 0.499 |
| Ministry of Information and Communications | 0.781 | 0.721 |
| Ministry of Health | 0.775 | 0.725 |
| The State Bank of Viet Nam | 0.770 | 0.825 |

| Ministries and ministerial-level agencies | IT application index | IT infrastructure index |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Ministry of Labour, War invalids and Social Affairs | 0.765 | 0.650 |
| Ministry of Science and Technology | 0.761 | 0.775 |
| Ministry of Planning and Investment | 0.758 | 0.775 |
| Ministry of Justice | 0.752 | 0.750 |
| Ministry of Education and Training | 0.740 | 0.690 |
| Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development | 0.717 | 0.803 |
| Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 0.700 | 0.650 |
| Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism | 0.674 | 0.650 |
| Ministry of Transport | 0.662 | 0.517 |
| Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment | 0.650 | 0.617 |
| Ministry of Construction | 0.650 | 0.725 |
| Ministry of Home Affairs | 0.610 | 0.638 |
| Government Inspectorate | 0.471 | 0.675 |
| Committee for Ethnic Affairs | 0.318 | 0.279 |

Table 2 ICT Index of IT application and development of all ministries in 2018 (Ministry of Information and Communications)

The government building a digital government has encouraged digital transformation in enterprises and organizations. In addition, the Ministry of Information and Communication also organize ICT summit with the participation of many leading companies in IT field to promote digital transformation. As the results, enterprises are more aware of the benefits of information technology in their operation. This will be opportunity for VNPT-IT in the market when both government and enterprises increase investment on information technology.

4.2.4 Threats

Meanwhile when considering the threat aspect, VNPT-IT has many competitors in the information technology market. The IT market in Vietnam is developing with the presence of large enterprises and many small and medium company. There are

many companies provide software solutions and supply technology equipment currently on the market with variety of products competing with VNPT-IT. The main competitors of the company are large enterprises who has long term operation in this field and good reputation in customer mind. According to Vietnam Report, which listed the top 10 prestigious enterprises in software solutions, technology equipment suppliers and telecommunications in 2019 which include FPT, CMC, MISA, ELCOM, HPT, etc. These companies are the main competitors which have a competition in terms of market share, customers, price, quality and human resource. Therefore, the competitive pressure in the business is very high. Moreover, the number of new small and medium enterprises participating in information technology market is increasing. In recent years, after Vietnam joined WTO in 2007, the Vietnamese market has opened to foreign investors. Government also issued policies in order to eliminate the barrier and promote the free trade with other countries. As a result, it leads to the increasing of private companies and attract more foreign direct investment into Vietnamese market. It is a challenge for VNPT-IT to compete with both private companies and foreign invested companies. Furthermore, VNPT-IT is also under competitive pressure from potential new entrants and substitute products. According to Michael Porter, new entrants can put pressure on product prices, costs and investment amount during competition whereas substitute products uses a different technology to perform the same or similar function. New entrants can be potential competitors that are not currently in the industry but may affect the industry in the future. The information technology service is a very attractive market for investors to join in this industry. The emergence of new competitors will lead to the competition in human resource and market share in the future.

Another threat that VNPT-IT ought to face is the difficulty to have products and services that meet customer demand. VNPT-IT has a large customer base and wide product line. However, different customers have different needs that the company must to understand. The company needs to design and customize products based on the customer's individual requirement in order to offer a personalized customer experience. It will cost more time and resources for the company to satisfy their customer. In addition, the constant innovation of technology products leads to higher

expectations for quality products and services. Company might meet their current requirements, but customers always hope seller can do more. Meeting the customer's expectation will help the company to be more competitive in the market and retain customers. Therefore VNPT-IT needs to constantly keep up the latest technology trend, update the application version and innovate products to meet their demand.

4.3 Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning

4.3.1 Segmentation

Market segmentation is an essential process for VNPT-IT to understand its customers and identify potential market. The company divide the information technology market into different group by using multiple variables which are geographic, firmographic and behavior.

| Geographic | |
|----------------------|---|
| Countries | Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia |
| Regions | 63 provinces of Vietnam, Vientiane |
| Firmographic | |
| Type of organization | Government entities, enterprises, health facilities, schools and individual |
| Company size | Small and medium enterprises, large enterprise, stated owned enterprises |
| Behavioral | |
| Volume usage | Large quantities, medium, small quantities |
| Benefit expectations | Quality, innovative, delivery, technical support |

Table 3 Market segmentation for VNPT-IT

VNPT-IT segment the market based on geographic factor. The company mainly targets the Vietnamese market to serve the needs of domestic companies and organizations. As the advantage of the VNPT Group, VNPT-IT can communicate with potential customers in 63 provinces across the country. Moreover, VNPT intends to promote its digital services to other ASEAN countries, especially in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. The company has cooperated with Laos government to build electronic government in Laos and sold products to some enterprises in Myanmar and Cambodia. These countries are developing and have high demand for information technology products, so it is a potential market for VNPT-IT. Company also has a wide product portfolio that suitable for variety of organizations. Based on the type of industry, customers will have different demands for products, so the company classify customers according to organization attributes. Besides, different sized companies often have different consumption level. Therefore, it is reasonable for VNPT-IT to segment the market by the firmographic factor to understand its customers. Furthermore, company can divide the market into group according to customer behavior such as benefit sought and volume usage. The company's products and service provide many values and advantages like quality, innovative and technical support. These elements are motivating factors that influencing customer purchase decision.

4.3.2 Targeting

VNPT-IT has a wide product portfolio that is suitable for many types of organizations. Therefore, it is important for the company to identify a target segment so that VNPT-IT can prioritize its resource for potential customers. The segmentation is based on firmographic with different requirements. The company select a differentiated strategy to approach different market segment. This method is suitable for VNPT-IT, to aim to target customers more and meet the requirements from each segment.

The first target group is the Vietnamese government and government entities. In recent years, the government are being more aware of the importance of information

technology and has invested in this field. They encourage digital transformation both in government agency and enterprise in order to build electronic government. To achieve that objective, the government has issued many decisions and decrees related to applying IT application in government agency activities. Therefore, it is an opportunity for VNPT-IT to cooperate with the government to build a digital government. Moreover, VNPT-IT products and services are suitable with the government structure, so it is convenient to implement in practice.

The second segment that the company aim to is domestic organizations. These organizations include enterprise, health facilities and schools in Vietnam. The industrial revolution 4.0 has been provided many opportunities for Vietnamese enterprises and increased the awareness of the important of information technology. Therefore, enterprises have raised their investments in the IT sector to improve their performance. According annual report of General Statistics Office of Vietnam, in 2018 there are a total of 717,755 businesses operating across the country. Moreover, in 2019 there are 13,583 health facilities. These organizations are potential customers who have demands on information technology products and services.

The third group is organizations in the ASEAN countries. These countries are developing and have demands on information technology products. Besides, with previous international partnerships from the parent company, it will be an advantage for VNPT-IT towards the international market. Therefore, this is an opportunity for VNPT-IT to cooperate with foreign enterprises and export its products to other countries.

4.3.3 Positioning

Since VNPT-IT established, the company has achieved many successes and created its brand image in the minds of customers. According to the Vietnam report, the VNPT brand is in top ten of information technology and telecommunication enterprises in Vietnam in 2019. Company position statement is "For a civilized and transparent society that contributes to a better Vietnamese life". To achieve this mission, VNPT-IT products and services must have prominent points that differentiate the product and image from other competitors. The company position itself as a leading

enterprise in the field of information technology in Vietnam that deliver high quality and innovative products and services. Providing quality products starts by creating innovative products that suitable with customer requirements. The company has invested in facilities include building data centers that meet international standard and purchasing copyright of new technology. By applying modern technology and good facilities, the company can guarantee quality application software development. Besides, the employee is also an essential factor in order to produce quality products. Competent and responsible employees can improve product quality. Therefore, the company has recruited good IT programmers from universities to develop the software. The company also organizes training courses in order to improve employee knowledge and experience.

Meanwhile in order to deliver good customer services, the company has trained and educated its employees about products knowledge and important skills. Therefore, employees can assist their customer during sales by providing advice and solving customer problem or guiding customers to use the product. The sales team also keep contact with customers for long-term relationship so employees can inform customers when there are new products or promotions. In addition, the company has online support by contact through email, hotline and website. The communication channels for complaints and problem solving for customers are always guaranteed to have listeners and respond quickly when customers call. These activities aim to improve the customer experience and deliver good customer services.

Another factor that differentiate VNPT-IT from other competitors is the wide scope of service. The company takes advantages from the VNPT Group that has branches in all 63 provinces of Vietnam. Therefore, the company can provide technical support and maintenance for customers in all areas. In addition, it is also more convenient for customers to purchase products and services in their hometown instead of contact with business center in other cities. This factor makes VNPT-IT different from other information technology companies because not all companies have branches nationwide.

4.4 Marketing mix strategy

4.4.1 Product

According to Dibb and Simkin, the term product includes everything both intangible and tangible that company offer in an exchange with customer. The company must ensure that they offer suitable products and services which meet customers' desire and needs. For VNPT-IT, company has a depth product line which offer products and services in information technology field. It has a total of 131 products and services which can be classified as accessory equipment and business services that customers use in their operation. The firm divides products and services into five main categories which consist of electronic government, medical, education, smart city and enterprise. Each category is classified into smaller sub-categories for better management. Smart city group includes smart travel, safe city, urban planning, agriculture and smart environment and land information system. Some products have achieved impressive achievements. VnEdu has become the number one education network in Vietnam in terms of market share and has been deployed across 63 provinces with 12,800 schools using the school information management system, nearly 4 million student records, more than 1.2 million e-book accounts and 2,000 websites. Meanwhile, VNPT-HIS has deployed up to 7,278 health facilities at 60 provinces. For smart city category, there are 19 provinces/cities cooperating with VNPT-IT to develop smart city project and 12 cities have completed smart travel. The VNPT-iOffice which is electronic document management system has been used by more than 16,150 units whereas VNPT-iGate is used by 2,056 units. (Website of VNPT-IT)

Kotler et al. (2016) analyzed products by three levels. The first level is the core benefit or service that is valuable to the customer. VNPT-IT aim to provide products and services that always meet customer needs and requirements. To achieve this objective, the company set their product strategy around four core values. The firm will concentrate on customers with the goal of satisfying customers' desires. The customer is the center of the business to which the company will deliver a positive customer experience and quality products. In addition, the company is constantly

researching and innovating in order to provide the best quality products and services to keep up with new the technology and customer expectations. Therefore, VNPT-IT believe that they will become a trusted long-term partner with the customer. (Website of VNPT 2020)

The second level is the actual product which consists of features, design, quality, capabilities and packaging. The company's business area focusses on researching and producing information technology products. VNPT-IT products and services including five categories: electronic government, medical, education, smart city and enterprise. The electronic government group is a set of software included web portal, document management system, residence management system, managing employee software, electronic district system. E-government products and services are suitable with Vietnamese government framework that meet government requirements and an easy to implement. Products aim to computerization government operation in order to improve the quality of serving citizens and better management. Meanwhile as to the medical aspect, company has three sub-categories which are VNPT Pharmacy, VNPT-HIS and VNPT-HMIS. VNPT Pharmacy is a set of pharmacy management software that performs the following functions: inventory management, portfolio management, sale management, office administration, etc. VNPT-HIS is hospital management software that help the customer operate and manage hospital task in order to optimize the process of medical treatment and save time. VNPT-HMIS aim to minimize burden on bookkeeping and reporting for health center. Products in the medical category conform to policies of the Ministry of Health. Meanwhile, there are 20 products in education group which support students, parents and schools. It includes school management, online exam, English learning software, etc. For enterprise category, VNPT's products serve the purpose of management, data storage and security. The products are good quality and durable.

For augmented product level before making sale, the company has sales teams that provide target customers with technical advice regarding products features and functions. In addition, customers can register for trial and experience the products

and services before deciding purchasing decision. The company also accepts personalized product requests if customers demand. About after sale services, VNPT supports product transportation, installation and deployment. The company will organize training and detailed instructions for customer's employees on how to use the products. The delivery cost will base on distance and type of transportation that mentioned in the contract. Moreover, the company also warrants its products based on a contract. The warranty includes maintaining, repairing and products exchange if the customers find fault on the items. The company has online support information and branches in all Vietnamese provinces so it can provide technical support and maintenance when customers need. Furthermore, VNPT-IT accepts payment in 2 forms: bank transfer or cash payment. Customers can make direct payment by cash at business center with sales officer after signing the contract. The company also allows customers pay in several installments depend on term of contract. Long-term and trustworthy customers will receive credit from the company as a method to improve competitiveness and retain customer.

4.4.2 Price

Pricing decision is always an essential issue for VNPT-IT. The company aim to set a reasonable price not only to gain profit but also attract customer. This means VNPT-IT need to consider which price will be perceived by customers as worth value for money, while still gaining profit. Therefore, the firm has developed three main pricing strategies to approach to customers.

The first one is list pricing which company sets a fixed price for a product or service. In November 2018, the VNPT Group issued document number 888 about the regulation of calculating VNPT-IT's product and service price. The company determine selling price by using cost plus pricing method. The product price will equal total cost plus predetermine profit target and divide to product quantity. The total cost includes all cost incurred relating to the production of the product such as depreciation expense of current assets, operating cost and management cost. Then, the company add a target profit in addition to this figure to arrive at the final price. The predetermine profit target will be given by VNPT Group based on the percentage

of total manufacturing cost. By using cost plus pricing method, the company guarantee that they cover all production cost and gain steady profit. Moreover, it also allows the company to calculate a customized product because the firm can evaluate cost for specific production step. VNPT-IT always aim to deliver high quality products and good customer service so the selling price may expensive. For example, the price of VNPT-ERP which is an enterprise management software is 2.357 billion VND (89,672 EUR). If the customer requires installation and initial deployment it will cost more according to contract. Some products or services require customer pay monthly or annually to use it such as VNPT-AMS cost 4.715 million VND (179 EUR) for one account annually to use it. This selling price also apply as transfer pricing which VNPT-IT sells product to another unit within VNPT Group. The company decide to select market-based cost so the transfer price for related entity is equal with selling price on the market. This policy brings many advantages for both VNPT-IT and corporation such as saving cost on sales effort and simplify the internal accounting system.

The second pricing strategy that company use to approach customer is bundle pricing. VNPT-IT sells a package or set of products and services that related to each other. The bundle offering has lower price than they would cost if customers bought them separately. Therefore, it will encourage the customer to purchase a bundle of products and services. This is psychological method that make the customer perceive the price more reasonable when they could receive more value. As the results, this pricing strategy makes the product price become more competitive in the technology market and increase the sales number.

In addition, VNPT-IT also decide product and service price based on negotiated pricing. It means even when there are stated list price, the final price is determined by negotiation between seller and buyer. Some enterprises tend to customize products and service to suitable with their situation. Therefore, in order to meet the customer demand company also produce products according to customer specific requirements. The price for this type of product and service will be establish through a bargain between VNPT-IT and customer. The negotiated price will be calculated based on total cost of the product and then through negotiation with customer. The

sales team who communicate directly with customer can decide how many percentages the product price will be reduced.

Furthermore, VNPT-IT also provides price discount from the list price to the customer based on purchasing quantity. Customers will receive reduction in price if they purchase product in large number. A good example is VNPT-Cabinet software that is used for paperless meeting purposes. The product price normally is 6.031 million VND (229.13 EUR) for one account monthly. However, if the customer purchases more than 300 accounts, the price for one account will be cheaper according to purchasing number. The following table shows the difference in price of VNPT-Cabinet product based on number of accounts.

| Number of accounts | Price for one account monthly (Euro) |
|---------------------------|---|
| Less than 300 | 229.13 |
| 301 to 500 | 220.85 |
| 501 to 700 | 217.54 |
| 701 to 900 | 215.00 |
| More than 900 | 171.95 |

4.4.3 Place

According to Blythe (2016) distribution has an important role to success in business to business context. The company should select a suitable distribution channel so customers can purchase product more conveniently and have effective access to products and services. For VNPT-IT, the company has invested on distribution channel to achieve appropriate system and reach potential customers. The company aims at diverse target markets, so they use multiple distribution channels to approach consumers.

Firstly, the company has a direct channel that sell directly from producer to business customers. VNPT-IT has five centers in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh city, Da Nang, Hai Phong and Tien Giang. In addition, the firm also has two data centers in Hanoi, one in Da Nang and two data centers in Ho Chi Minh City (VNPT Online). These cities have a high population and urbanization rate in Vietnam. Therefore, it can create more opportunities for company to reach target customers. The direct channel is suitable for VNPT-IT because most of the customers are in the Vietnamese region, so it allows the company to provide product transportation, maintenance and assistance when customers need.

In addition, the company also has business to business distributors as its intermediaries. This middleman is VNPT-Vinaphone and business center which is the subsidiary entity of VNPT Group. There is a total of 63 branches of VNPT business center from the north to south of Vietnam. They perform a wide variety of functions. They have sales and marketing team which is in charge of communicating directly with customers and sale products. Moreover, they also provide technical advice, installation and maintenance service for information technology products. By having 63 business centers across the country, the company can deliver products and services to customers in all region. The business center is designed with the main colors of white and blue which is the symbol color of VNPT. The figure below presents the interior of VNPT business center in Hanoi. Customers will be advised in a friendly and professional environment by company consultant.



Figure 13 VNPT business center in Hanoi (VNPT Website, 2020)

Furthermore, VNPT-IT also serve its customers through online channel. This channel aims to deliver friendly and convenient online sales for customers. Customers can purchase products on the website or through the company's email. The online channel is suitable for simple products that are easy to package and deliver such as VNPT-Pharmacy software, VNPT E-learning, vnEdu mobile application, etc. This type of channel allows the company install software directly over the internet and remove unnecessary intermediaries. Customers also can contact the company's employees through email or hotline to receive support and instructions on product installation and using.

4.4.4 Promotion

VNPT-IT use various marketing tools to communicate with target customers. The message aims to inform and persuade the audience about product function and feature in order to improve sale numbers. The company's marketing communication concentrates on the promotional mix which include advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations. The company should combine these elements in a suitable method so the promotion will be effective.

For VNPT-IT, personal selling is the most common method to approach clients. Many customers prefer tailored product or personalized service so personal selling is suitable method to fit their requirements. Both VNPT-IT and VNPT-Vinaphone has sales and marketing department which employees in charge of informing and persuading customers through personal communication. The sales force are well trained employees who understand company products and services and have good knowledge about information technology market. They also perform many functions before and after sale. Employees must prepare product document, product trial and product manual before sales. During sale, sales representatives also perform the role of consultant which provide advices and implement the product. In addition, personal selling allows the company take care their customer proactively. VNPT-IT can receive immediate feedback from customers and adjust their marketing approach accordingly. As a result, personal selling can encourage customer purchase decision and differentiate VNPT-IT from competitor. Thus, this method is an important marketing tool for VNPT-IT that sell high value products to other organizations.

Moreover, VNPT-IT also use publicity as supplement factor for personal selling effort to ensure that the company achieves specific promotion objectives. The company use a variety of publicity mechanism in order to create the mutual understanding and goodwill between company and its target customers. The enterprise has received many famous awards and endorsements from other organizations. In 2019, the company received 7 awards in International Business Awards 2019 of Stevie Awards for the best IT products category of the year. Award winning products include VNPT Smart Ads, VNPT Check, VNPT HIS, VNPT Cloud Contact Center

VCC, VNPT Smart Cloud and VNPT Pharmacy. Moreover, the company also won many prestigious national awards in the field of information technology such as: Sao Khue Award for VNPT-CA and Vietnamese Talent Award for VNPT-Einvoice products. Furthermore, enterprise is telecom award winner in 2019 voted by International Finance Magazine for best digital product provider for E-Government services and most innovative digital transformation product and service provider. These events have public attention and appear on online article and media. In addition, the company's products and services are recommended by third parties or partners to increase the credibility. For example, according to the company website, VNPT-HIS is recommended by the ministry of health. Besides, the company also organize events and press conferences to announce important information or introduce a new product. The below figure is a picture of Mr. Ngo Dien Hy – general director of VNPT-IT declared that VNPT would bring AI technologies into the service at 4G International Conference 2018. The conference involved journalists to take photos and write articles



Figure 14 Mr. Ngo Dien Hy – General Director of VNPT-IT speech at 4G International Conference 2018 (VNPT Dien Bien, 2018)

For advertising, the company concentrate on advertising on the Internet to communicate with customers and introduce new products. VNPT-IT use social media such as Facebook and YouTube to support other marketing tools. The Facebook page of VNPT-IT has more than 4,200 subscribers. It often updates important information that make customers aware of company products and understand product features. The content is updated regularly and there are a number of interactive audiences. Moreover, the company use YouTube channel to instruct how to use the product step by step. Besides, the company also appear on mass media and online article. The company representative is interviewed by journalists and by that, it is the opportunity for VNPT-IT to promote company images and build good reputation in the customer's perception.

Finally, the company participate in exhibitions and workshops to meet its current and potential customers. VNPT-IT send experts to these events to introduce products and promote company images. In addition, it is also an opportunity to improve customer relationships, build image credibility, collect market information and take

product orders. Therefore, exhibitions and workshops are important events for VNPT-IT to improve brand awareness.



Figure 15 VNPT-IT at Laos ICT Expo 2019 (VNPT Website, 2019)

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

With the mission of being a leading enterprise in the field of information technology, VNPT-IT is always the pioneer in implementing and leading digital applications in Vietnam. The company has long-term strategies to develop information technology in order to facilitate the application and promote the development of IT in society. Based on analyzing collected information from interview and personal observation, the author suggests some recommendations for VNPT-IT to improve sales number and its competitiveness on information technology market.

Investing in infrastructure and product development

Information technology is a competitive market where technology is constantly developing. Therefore, VNPT-IT should increase investment in purchasing advance technology and building infrastructure. The selected technology must be suitable with the technology trends and Vietnam situation. During the trend of Industry 4.0, VNPT-IT should research and study the core technologies of this revolution. The company will become proficient with new technology and apply them to develop more products. In addition, the company can consider purchasing the copyright of application from third parties with technologies that cannot be developed on their own. Currently, VNPT-IT has cooperated with technology companies in the world to build research laboratories on AI, blockchain, IoT, cyber security and cloud computing. Therefore, the company will master these technologies and apply them in new products in order to meet customer demands and increase sales figure.

Improving employee skills and knowledge

People is an important factor in VNPT-IT marketing mix strategy, especially company concentrates on personal selling for promoting products and services. Employees are communicating directly with customers to inform and persuade customer about product information. Moreover, sales teams also perform the role of educator who support and provide advice to customers. Employees explain and guide customers how to use products effectively and ensure the products work properly. In addition, salespeople need to understand both the company's products

and their competitors' offering so they can provide information as well as differentiate products from competitors. Therefore, VNPT-IT should organize training courses for employees so they will gain more knowledge of company products and information technology market. Furthermore, employees can practice sample cases so they will have more experience and preparation to handle situations when contact with customers. Besides, company should have rewards for the employees with good achievements to encourage them to serve customers.

Promoting on social media

According to Statista survey, social media has been common in Vietnam in recent years especially some platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Zalo. (Statista, 2020) VNPT-IT has Facebook page and YouTube channel currently, but number of subscribers is still low. Therefore, company should promote advertising on social media. The administrators of Facebook page should post more contents about product feature, company events or any type of information that audience will interest. Moreover, company should interact more with audience by responding their comments and inbox. This helps the company to assist customers online and improve service satisfaction. Besides, company can use social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn as researching tool to find potential customers and their competitors. Meanwhile, for YouTube channel, the company should create more video about products information and explaining how to use them. The content should explain accurately how product works and why it is beneficial in customer business goals. Moreover, the company should have testimonial videos from third parties to persuade other customers. Videos can increase engagement with customers and help them obtain information easier. Besides, company can use social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn as researching tool to find potential customers and their competitors. As the results, company use social media could attract more prospects and build brand image in customer perception.

Improving customer service

In recent years, the technology is constantly developing, and competitors are offering similar products and services that are interchangeable while prices are becoming

more competitive. To be successful, the company should concern both new technology and how to serve customers so that they are always satisfied. Therefore, VNPT-IT needs to improve customer service in order to increase sales and competitiveness. Customer service concentrates on providing satisfaction and reliability to user in maintaining and developing IT services. The company should establish customer service center which responsible for managing and implementing customer service activities. This division will provide technical support and advice to customers. Moreover, customer service needs to be thorough and regular in order to build long-term relationships with customers. When there are promotions or newly launched products, company should have an announcement to customers. In addition, the company should also collect customer feedback to improve the customer service.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Main findings

Marketing mix strategy plays an important role in the business operation of VNPT-IT. Marketing mix is considered as the key for succeeding business, improving sales number and company competitiveness. VNPT-IT receives many advantages from VNPT Group included financial capital, distribution channel and infrastructure. However, the company still has some drawbacks while the information technology is competitive. The thesis has summarized the marketing mix and STP model theory. Moreover, it also analyzed the current situation and marketing mix strategy of VNPT-IT. On that basis and combined with the personal experience, the author proposes some recommendation in order to improve company competitiveness and sales number,

The author analyzed four factors of marketing mix of VNPT-IT included product, price, place and promotion in order to evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy. The company has a total of 131 products and services which can be divided into five main categories: government, enterprises, medical, education and smart cities. The company also provide many supports when customers purchasing products such as providing technical advice, free trial, delivery, warranty, etc. Meanwhile, the company applies a variety of pricing strategies such as cost based pricing, bundle pricing and negotiated pricing strategy in order to make product prices more reasonable and attract potential customers. The company has branches in five urban area which are Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh city, Danang, Hai Phong and Tien Giang. Moreover, by using 63 business centres of the parent company as intermediaries, VNPT-IT can contact customers in all region of Vietnam. For promotion aspect, the company's marketing communication concentrate on the promotional mix which include advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations. Personal selling is the most common method for VNPT-IT to approach prospects. Besides, the company is also taking advantage of the Internet and social network to advertise its products and services.

In conclusion, VNPT-IT has been well implemented its marketing mix strategy to promote products to more audiences and become more competitive on the information technology market. Through analyzing the current company situation and the marketing mix strategy, the author suggest VNPT-IT should invest in new technology and improve customer service in order to increase sales number and company competitiveness. Moreover, company should organize training courses to enhance employees' skills and knowledge. The company should also take advantage of social network development in Vietnam to promote its product on these platforms so the advertisement can reach to more potential customers.

6.2 Research limitations and recommendation for further research

The company mentioned in this thesis is VNPT-IT, a company operating in the field of information technology in Vietnam. Therefore, due to geographical element and the characteristic of information technology business, the finding of this research may not suitable with enterprises operated in other industries or in international context. In addition, the research capacity of the author is still limited due to the conditions of time and experience, so it is certainly difficult to avoid the deficiency in term of theory as well as assessment of the company's marketing mix strategy. Therefore, the author is looking forward to receiving the contributions from supervisor, marketing experts and other researchers to improve the thesis. A future study can analyze other element of marketing, for instance to identify the factors that influence customer purchasing decision.

7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

White (2014) explained validity as the research findings answer fully the study objectives and ensure the data was analyzed correctly. Meanwhile, reliability refer to study consistency, accuracy and credibility. In addition, this factor also considers when the results have been appropriated and conducted several times by other researchers and obtained similar results. (White et al., 2014)

Firstly, about the validity factor of this research, the primary material was collected from interview between the author and head of sales and marketing department of VNPT-IT. Moreover, the data also obtained from author's observation to gain a better insight into the company's marketing mix strategy. In addition, the questionnaire for interview is designed based on literature review in theoretical section so there will be coherent connection between theoretical and empirical study. The secondary data is collected from books and articles related to marketing mix topic which was analyzed in theoretical part. These books and articles are from academic sources and have been recommended by thesis supervisor. The information from these sources is mostly published within the past 10 years so the provided information is suitable with current situation. The online information is also collected from reliable sources. Therefore, the author can guarantee that the findings achieve the research objectives and fully answer the mentioned questions.

Meanwhile, considering reliability factor of this thesis the information is collected and analyzed from the answers of the marketing experts of the case company. The questionnaire is designed in Vietnamese version so interviewees can understand the questions and avoid misunderstanding during the interview process. Moreover, the author also had an interview with other employees of this department to ensure that the received information is similar. The questionnaire is mentioned in Appendix. The content of empirical part is mainly based on interviewee response so the reliability of this study can be guarantee.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express his appreciation to the teachers of Vaasa University of Applied Science for teaching, guiding and creating the best study environment for author in the process of studying and researching. Especially, the gratitude toward his supervisor - Mr. Jukka Paldanius who provided recommendation and instructed the author throughout the research process to complete the thesis

In addition, the author would also like to thank the members of sales and marketing department and other employees of VNPT-IT for facilitating and providing data so that the author can complete the thesis.

Vaasa, 6 May 2020

Tung Dao.

9 REFERENCES

Baines, P. & Fill, C. 2014, Marketing. 3rd edition. Oxford, United Kingdom. Oxford University Press.

Blumberg, B., Cooper, D. & Schindler, P. 2011. Business Research Method. 3rd European edition. Berkshire, UK. McGraw-Hill Education.

Blythe, J. (2010). Cim coursebook marketing essentials. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.puv.fi>

Blythe, J. & Martin, J. 2016, Essential of Marketing. 6th edition. Harlow, England. Pearson.

Dibb, S. & Simkin, L. 2012, Marketing Concepts & Strategies. 6th edition. Hampshire, UK. Cengage Learning EMEA.

Forbes Vietnam. 2020. Top 50 brands in 2019. Accessed 10.1.2020 <https://forbesvietnam.com.vn/danh-sach/forbes-viet-nam-cong-bo-50-thuong-hieu-dan-dau-nam-2019-6949.html>

General statistic office of Vietnam. 2019. Announcing white paper for Vietnamese enterprises in 2019. Accessed 12.2.2020 <https://www.gso.gov.vn/Default.aspx?tabid=382&ItemID=19273>

Government of Vietnam. 2015. Government Resolution No. 36a: electronic government. Accessed 6.2.2020 <https://mic.gov.vn/Upload/VanBan/36.signed.pdf>

International Finance Website. Winner of telecom awards 2019. Accessed 22.2.2020 <https://awards.internationalfinance.com/award-winners/winners-of-telecom-awards-2019/>

Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. 2016, Principles of Marketing. Scandinavian edition, 2nd edition. Harlow, England. Pearson.

Kotler, P. & Keller, K. 2012, Marketing Management. 14th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Pearson Prentice Hall.

Lake, L. 2019. What the Marketing Mix Is and Why It's Important. Accessed on 7.1.2020 <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/what-is-a-marketing-mix-2295520>

Ministry of Information and Communications. 2017. Evaluation of information technology application level of the ministry, government agencies and cities in 2016 report. Accessed on 15.12.2019 [https://www.mic.gov.vn/Upload/TinTuc/baocaoUDCNTT2016\(1\).pdf](https://www.mic.gov.vn/Upload/TinTuc/baocaoUDCNTT2016(1).pdf)

Ministry of Information and Communications. 2019. Ministry of Information and Communications 2019 - The year of new innovations. Accessed 30.3.2020 <https://www.mic.gov.vn/Pages/TinTuc/140457/Bo-Thong-tin-va-Truyen-thong-2019---Nam-cua-nhung-khoi-tao-moi.html>

Porter, M. 2008. The Five Competitive Forces That Shape Strategy. Harvard Business Review 86, 1, 78–93. <https://hbr.org/2008/01/the-five-competitive-forces-that-shape-strategy>

Schindler, R. 2011, Pricing Strategies: A Marketing Approach. 1st edition. California, United State of America. SAGE Publication.

Statista. 2020. Leading social media platforms in Vietnam in 2019. Accessed 30.04.2020 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/941843/vietnam-leading-social-media-platforms/>

TopDev. 2020. Vietnam IT market report 2020. Accessed 30.3.2020 https://topdev.vn/Eng_VietnamITNation2020_ByTopDev.pdf

Vietnam Top 10 reputation award. Accessed 10.1.2020 <https://toptenvietnam.vn/TopTen/Index/58?year=2019&viewType=list>

Weinstein, A. 2004. Handbook of market segmentation: Strategic targeting for business and technology firms, third edition. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.puv.fi>

Weinstein, A. 2014, Target market selection in B2B technology markets. Journal of Marketing Analytics. 2, 1, 59–69 <https://doi.org/10.1057/jma.2014.6>

White, B. & Rayner S. 2014. Dissertation skills for business and management students. 2nd edition. Hampshire, UK. Cengage Learning EMEA.

Wilson, J. 2010, Essentials of business research: a guide to doing your research project. 1st edition. California, United State of America. SAGE Publication

Website of VNPT-IT. Accessed 24.4.2020 <https://vnptit.vn/gioi-thieu-chung>

Website of VNPT. Accessed 15.4.2020 <https://vnpt.com.vn/english>

Website of VNPT Dienbien. Accessed 15.4.2020 <http://dienbien.vnpt.vn/tin-tuc/vnpt-se-dua-cac-cong-nghe-ai-vao-dich-vu-802.html>

Website of VNPT Online. Accessed 16.4.2020 <https://vnptonline.com/datacenter/thong-tin-datacenter.html>

APPENDIX

The questionnaire:

I Company general information

1. What is company vision and mission?
2. What are the strengths and weakness of VNPT-IT?
3. What are the opportunities and threats for VNPT-IT in information technology market?
4. What are the achievements and award the company has achieved?
5. What is the function of sales and marketing department in company?

II STP Model

6. How company segment the market?
7. Which market segment that company is targeting and will target in the future?
8. What is company positioning on IT market?
9. What factors make VNPT-IT different from other competitors?

III Marketing mix

10. What is the current marketing mix strategy of VNPT-IT?
11. What is your perception on the importance of the marketing mix strategy?
12. What products and services does the company have?
13. What benefits customer will receive when purchasing products or services?
14. What are the pricing strategies of company?
15. How company distribute products to customers?

16. How company promote its products and services to customer?
17. What contents company post on social media?
18. Does company have any sales promotion during special occasion? If yes, for which product and when?
19. What is the future development orientation of VNPT-IT?
20. In your perception, what solutions to improve sales number and company competitiveness?